

**United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Region VI  
POLLUTION REPORT**

**Date:** Friday, July 11, 2008

**From:** Roberto Bernier

**To:** Debbie Dietrich, Office of Emergency Management      Ragan Broyles, Superfund Division

**Subject:** POLREP 3 of 3

Clute Texas Mercury Response

(b) (6) Clute, TX

Latitude: (b) (6)

Longitude: (b) (6)

<b>POLREP No.:</b>	3	<b>Site #:</b>	A6H7
<b>Reporting Period:</b>		<b>D.O. #:</b>	11
<b>Start Date:</b>	7/3/2008	<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA
<b>Mob Date:</b>	7/3/2008	<b>Response Type:</b>	Emergency
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>NPL Status:</b>	
<b>Completion Date:</b>	10/31/2008	<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>CERCLIS ID #:</b>		<b>Contract #</b>	EP-S6-07-02
<b>RCRIS ID #:</b>			

#### **Site Description**

On June 28, 2008, local authorities reported to the National Response Center (NRC No. 875602) that 3 private residences had been contaminated with approximately 6 pounds of mercury. A child found the mercury contained in a jar and played with it at his residence. Some of the mercury was transferred to two additional properties by neighbor kids that also handled the mercury. On June 19, 2008, local emergency response teams responded to 2 of the houses, removed elemental mercury and contaminated items and declared them remediated. The local teams responded to the source-house and removed the remaining mercury, a section of carpet from the front bedroom, and some soil at the house front yard; however, operations were suspended due to lack of funding. On July 3, 2008, EPA mobilized its Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START-3) contractors to the incident location to assess the situation and perform analytical screening of the source-house for mercury vapors. The residence was secured by the local authorities and the occupants of the house were relocated with relatives.

#### **Current Activities**

On 10 July 2008, EPA continued procedures to cleanup the mercury spill. Removal of personal effects from Bedroom 1 was completed, as well as removed the carpet to expose the wood floors. Personal effects were removed from the poly bags and staged for venting and solar remediation. Following venting and initial solar remediation, the personal effects were screened for mercury vapor concentration. Personal effects exhibiting mercury vapor concentrations greater than the EPA action level (for personal effects) were set aside to undergo additional remediation measures including solar remediation and cleaning with Merc-X solution. Personal effects unable to meet cleanup standards were staged for disposal in a roll-off box. EPA continued to screen inside the house to locate mercury hotspots. A mercury vacuum cleaner was utilized to remove and recover micro-sized beads of mercury and other debris from the wood floor of Bedroom 1. The den, dining room, kitchen, and laundry room were sealed from the front-half of the house with the addition of a poly layer set between the living room and den. Bedroom 2 and the loft (above the garage) were also sealed at the doorways with poly.

On 11 July 2008, EPA continued to screen personal effects and the inside of the house. Bedroom 1 and the living room exhibited elevated levels of mercury vapor in the front-half of the house. A mercury vacuum cleaner was used to continue remediation of the floor of Bedroom 1. Mercury-affected seams in the floor were coated with a mercury-absorbing sealant. Personal-effects were removed from the living room carpet, and a mercury vacuum cleaner was utilized. Furniture was scrubbed with Merc-X solution, lightly scrub-rinsed, and wrapped in poly for mercury vapor screening. The laundry room and the kitchen sink drainage pipe exhibited elevated levels of mercury vapor in the back-half of the house. The p-traps were removed from beneath the kitchen sink and the washing machine. The washing machine was filled with a concentration of Merc-X solution and the vacuum cleaners were removed from the laundry room for additional screening.

## **Planned Removal Actions**

Continue segregating, bagging, and screening personal items; indoor screening, venting, vacuum, binding, and removal of contaminated effects. Reduce mercury vapors to residential standards.

## **Next Steps**

Continue to remove personal effects from areas inside the house exhibiting elevated concentrations of mercury vapor to staging areas outside for analytical screening. Continue to isolate areas of elevated mercury vapor concentration in order to remove elemental mercury and remediate the residence. Perform wash cycle in washing machine with Merc-X solution. Remove remaining carpet on the back side of the house and apply Merc-x to all flooring.

## **Key Issues**

- Continue to maintain best management practices to prevent cross-contamination of mercury into areas of lesser mercury vapor concentration.
- Old wood flooring in Bedroom 1 could require the use of an epoxy coating.
- Continue monitoring for heat stress, a significant health and safety factor at this site.

## **Estimated Costs \***

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
<b>Extramural Costs</b>				
<b>Intramural Costs</b>				
<b>Total Site Costs</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

\* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

[response.epa.gov/clutemercury](http://response.epa.gov/clutemercury)